REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In this amendment, claim 8 has been amended to more specifically claim the type and source of light that cause the ablation.

In the October 1, 2003 office action, the Examiner rejected claims 7 and 8 as being unpatentable (35 USC 103(a)) over Vanlseghem (USP 4,764,449) in combination with Ehrlich (USP 5,874,011).

These rejections are traversed. No reasonable combination of the Vanlseghem reference and the Ehrlich reference provide all elements of the invention as claimed. In particular, both the Vanlseghem and Ehrlich references fail to teach the use of patterned light to cause removal of exposed portions of a layer of dielectric material by ablating. The term ablating refers to a process that removes material by vaporizing it.

In the office action, the Examiner referenced (1) column 3, lines 32 - 41, (2) column 10, lines 20 - 39, and (3) Figure 4 of the Vanlseghem reference and also (1) column 9, lines 1 - 45, and (2) Figure 7 of the Ehrlich reference. The cited portion of the Vanlseghem reference teaches exposing a photoresist to light and then developing the exposed areas and then using the formed mask to etch a support membrane which results in abrading the membrane and the underlying surface. In patterning the photoresist, the Vanlseghem reference only teaches the use of exposure to form a latent image and then using a development process to bring out the image as is the typical process for patterning photoresists. The passages noted by the Examiner in the Vanlseghem reference never teach the use of ablation to pattern the photoresist material.

The cited portion of Ehrlich reference also never teaches the use of ablation to pattern a material, let alone a dielectric masking material. The text in column 9, as noted by the Examiner, teaches the use of laser etching to etch a wafer or substrate. Column 2, lines 33 - 52 of the Ehrlich reference indicates that laser etching typically results in etching of the material in the presence of a reactive ambient gas and that a chemical reaction occurs in the illuminated area. Ehrlich indicates that the etching may be performed in a patterned manner by exposing the substrate or wafer through a photomask. In the passages indicated by the Examiner, Ehrlich does not teach the use of ablating (i.e. laser ablation) in patterning a material. Even more particularly, the Ehrlich reference has nothing to do with forming mask that includes a patterned dielectric that may be used in modifying a substrate. The problems addressed by Ehrlich are concerned with forming improved data transfer heads and have nothing to do with the resist laminates of the Vanlseghem.

Contrary to the Examiner's assertion, the problems addressed by Ehrlich and VanIseghem are not the same and thus the combination is inappropriate. Even if such a combination were appropriate and were made, the combined teachings would not yield the invention as presently claimed.

In summary, it is believed that claim7 is patentable in view of the combined teachings of VanIseghem and Ehrlich. As claim 8 inherits the limitations of its base claim, it is believed that it is also not obvious in view of the combination. In view of the amendment and remarks above, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection and passage to allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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